

To: Diane Monrad

STATEMENT AT NEWS CONFERENCE ON MAY 20, 1996

In Front of Gressette Building

by Barbara Moxon, President, Columbia Branch of AAUW

The 23 branches of the American Association of University Women in South Carolina are strong backers of full day kindergarten for all children. We believe that extending their early education produces better students, fewer dropouts and thus fewer delinquents. Money spent at the front end is prevention against the government having to spend more money in trying to correct all kinds of problems later in their lives.

We support the Senate plan to provide full day kindergarten for ALL children whose parents choose it and not just those at-risk. While at-risk children may have more of a need for the more academically slanted education of language and numbers concepts, all children need the benefits of learning to share, respect for authority, responsibility, and the importance of following rules in a group setting with a trained teacher. Additionally, if offering full day kindergarten only to children at-risk, we could be setting up a system encouraging children to fail the defining tests by parents who recognize their children could benefit from full day kindergarten.

The American Association of University Women does not support vouchers - either for kindergarten or the later grades. On the surface they may sound like a good idea, but we believe vouchers would undermine the public school system. We also believe they violate the constitutional provision of separation of church and state if allowed for religious schools.

Therefore we in AAUW urge the General Assembly to provide funding for full day kindergarten for all children as soon as fiscally possible and catch up with the rest of the states which have recognized and met this vital need for many years.